

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Date: Monday 22 September 2014

Time: 6.00 p.m.

Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Stevenage SG1 1HN

Present: Councillors: J Brown (in the Chair), D Bainbridge, L Bell, L Briscoe, E Connolly, G Snell and C Saunders.

Start/End Time: Start Time: 18.00 hrs.
Ended: 19.17 hrs.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, nominations were requested for the appointment of the Chair for the meeting.

It was duly proposed and seconded that Councillor J Brown be appointed as Chair for the meeting.

There being no other nominations, a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor J Brown be appointed as Chair.

Councillor J Brown then took the Chair.

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors J Hollywell, P Bibby and P Stuart.

Councillor J Brown declared a non-pecuniary interest as a trustee of the national cycling charity CTC.

2. MINUTES – 9 JULY 2014

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment & Economy Select Committee held on 9 July 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. GREEN TRAVEL PLAN

The Committee received an introduction to the Green Travel Plan from the Engineering

Service Manager.

The Committee was advised that the current plan was drawn around the results of a travel to work survey that had revealed that over 75% of the Council's staff travelled to work by car. An objective of the plan would be to reduce that percentage.

A first draft of the plan had actively sought to discourage car usage. Later drafts of the plan had put more emphasis on promoting other methods of travel, such as walking, using public transport or cycling, which could be encouraged through the 'Cycle to Work' scheme whereby an employee could purchase a bicycle and associated equipment via a salary sacrifice scheme.

The current plan had been signed off in October 2013 and the Engineering Manager gave an overview of the activities that had taken place in the interim, which included:

- A promotion of the Cycle to Work scheme in the foyer of Daneshill House
- The establishment of an arrangement to provide cycling and cycle maintenance training for staff,
- Enabling access to the building via the courtyard door, which was especially useful for cyclists,
- A review of the Council's Liftshare option (a web based software run by the County Council designed to link prospective car sharers), and
- A review of mileage rates to discourage the use of bigger engine motor vehicles and to encourage the use of small motorcycles and bicycles.

The Engineering Manager concluded by saying that he believed the way forward for the plan was by greater co-ordination across the Council but this was hindered by resource issues.

Members then made a number of comments and suggestions which included:

- Many staff had other commitments which necessitated the use of a motor vehicle despite them living in close proximity to their place of work,
- The Council could consider establishing 'park and ride' style sites so that staff could park on the outskirts of town and continue their journeys by a Council operated mini-bus
- Staff could be encouraged to sign up to Liftshare as they could possibly arrange car shares with other workers in the town, not just those with the Council
- Homeworking could be encouraged to remove the need to travel into the office at all, even if it was just for one day a week
- Benchmarking with other similar authorities
- The impact of car parking policies could have a knock on effect on residential streets close to the town centre and links with other town-wide parking projects should be identified.

In reply the Engineering Manager advised the Committee that many ideas had already been considered but had been discounted on the basis of cost or unsuitability, but given the high levels of car usage any reductions in car use should be seen in a positive light.

The Committee was further advised that a budget of £5,000 had been agreed to promote the plan. The relative merits of the Council joining the County's Liftshare scheme, as opposed to establishing a small cycle pool (including an electric cycle) for Officer visits within town were also discussed. The Committee was of the view that more information was required before any recommendation concerning spend could be made.

It was acknowledged that Long Term Action 2.1 on the plan should be renumbered as 2.10.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That Officers be requested to use the Message of the Day to promote the Green Travel Plan
2. That Officers be requested to circulate the cycle map and promotional leaflet to staff with payslips in spring 2015
3. That Officers be requested to return to the Committee in 12 months' time with a statement of progress against the action plan
4. That the Strategic Director Planning and Regeneration be requested to form a Steering Group to promote the Green Travel Plan and that the Group should include representation from Finance, HR, Facilities and the Communications team
5. That Officers be requested to undertake a desk-top benchmarking exercise of other authorities' travel plans to inform the spend decision relating to the budget awarded to promote the Green Travel Plan
6. That Officers be requested to support the County's Cycling Strategy objectives by ensuring robust linkages into the existing cycle network for new developments (Long term Action 2.10 refers).

4. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

None

5. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Not required.

6. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR